

**EPI Update for Friday, March 2, 2012**  
**Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)**  
**Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)**

**Items for this week's EPI Update include:**

- **Influenza specimens needed for surveillance**
- **Testing for human rabies**
- **American Veterinary Medical Association Public Service Award**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

**Influenza specimens needed for surveillance**

Because of the late start and low incidence of influenza this season, relatively few specimens have been submitted to the State Hygienic Laboratory (SHL). Therefore, SHL and IDPH are revising our strategy and are requesting additional specimen submission to better determine the prevalence and types of influenza throughout the state.

*It is NOW requested that labs submit ALL specimens that are rapid test positive and specimens from ALL hospitalized patients with influenza-like illness, regardless of rapid test result. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.*

Instructions for submission of specimens can be found at [www.shl.uiowa.edu/services/influenza](http://www.shl.uiowa.edu/services/influenza). For information on IDPH influenza surveillance, visit [www.idph.state.ia.us/IdphArchive/Archive.aspx?channel=FluReports](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/IdphArchive/Archive.aspx?channel=FluReports).

**Testing for human rabies**

Last week, human rabies was suspected in a central Iowa male (two days later, testing and clinical course excluded rabies as a diagnosis).

For human rabies, several different specimens are necessary to diagnose rabies ante-mortem (before death); no single test is sufficient. Tests are performed on samples of saliva, serum, spinal fluid, and skin biopsies of hair follicles at the nape of the neck. Saliva can be tested by virus isolation or reverse transcription followed by polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR). Serum and spinal fluid are tested for antibodies to rabies virus. Skin biopsy specimens are examined for rabies antigen in the cutaneous nerves at the base of hair follicles. This testing is done at the CDC, and is coordinated through the SHL.

All possible human rabies cases should be immediately reported to IDPH.

For more information on diagnosis of rabies in animals and humans, please visit [www.idph.state.ia.us/Cade/Rabies.aspx](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/Cade/Rabies.aspx) or [www.cdc.gov/rabies](http://www.cdc.gov/rabies)

### **American Veterinary Medical Association Public Service Award**

The American Veterinary Medical Association Council on Public Health and Regulatory Medicine selected Dr. Russell Currier (Iowa's Public Health Veterinarian for many years) to receive the 2012 AVMA Public Service Award at their February meeting.

The Public Service Award, established in 1968, was proposed to recognize a veterinarian for outstanding public service or unusual contributions to the practice or science of public health and regulatory veterinary medicine.

Congratulations Dr. Russell Currier!

### **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

None

### **Have a healthy and happy (and a bit warmer) week!**

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